

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is SPC Michael J. Tanguay, a member of the 143rd Military Police Company. We are a National Guard unit out of Hartford, Connecticut, which was mobilized February 7, 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. I have been invited here today to testify before you in regards to my experience of pre-deployment and deployment to Iraq as it pertains to the training and equipping we received. I thank you for this opportunity. It is the intent of my testimony today to provide you with the curriculum of training we received prior to and during our deployment, equipping issues we faced, and most importantly lessons we have learned. The goals I have set before myself and present to this committee, in testifying here before you, will aid in rectifying known problems and potential trouble spots coupled with an insight into the lessons we have learned.

In preparation for deployment my unit moved to Fort Drum, New York for a train-up mission. It is here where we received two months of theater specific training ranging from Arabic language lessons to convoy security operations. As a military police combat support unit we have a wide range of missions we can perform. Facing the uncertainty of war we did not know our specific mission so we took the time to review all standard operating procedures for each mission or task that we could face. We performed several live fire exercises to sharpen our marksmanship skills and re-familiarize ourselves with each weapon system. Mine awareness and unexploded ordnance classes were conducted, however Improvised Explosive Devices did not surface until we were once in theater. Medical aid, urban warfare tactics, patrol techniques, prisoner of war/detainee doctrine, area security operations, and convoy security procedures were key classes conducted that ultimately benefited us during our deployment.

The two-month train-up phase of the deployment provided ample time to train and become a unified fighting machine. However, poor time management skills, severe logistical issues, and improper equipment prevented us from training the way we ended up fighting. This motto of train the way we fight, highly adopted by my unit, is a foundational building block of our training curriculum. Nonetheless, without the proper

equipment at our training site, in preparing for a desert climate while bundled in three layers of winter clothing, and mismanagement of precious training time turned into a last minute dash to get up to speed in preparing for war.

The deficiency of the highly sought after unarmored humvee and interceptor vests, lack of training and time at the mock urban warfare town, and unintentional misguided operational procedures for various mission tasks proved to be key lessons learned and areas to improve on. More time spent at the mock urban warfare town would have proved extremely beneficial in building clearing techniques, possible ambush situations, and civilian considerations on the battlefield. Our unit spent 2 days out of the 2 months at this training site. Time is extremely precious in preparing for war but a 2-week minimum would prove extremely beneficial. Unintentional misguided operational procedures placed us at a temporary setback during the early going while we were in theater. Situational dictations coupled with an under manning strength hindered us in the way we trained and the way we ended up combating. For example, a traditional MP line company as myself is broken up into a 10-person squad with three vehicles, an ideal and perfect situation for any MP task. However, while on the ground in Iraq our squad consisted of six personnel and only two trucks, a severe setback and security concern when conducting such operations as area and convoy security. The operational tempo as high as it was along with a high demand for MP type missions dictated the changes that took place.

Arriving in Kuwait on April 15, 2003 was our last ditch effort to improve upon our training and ready our gear for the push towards Baghdad. In our 3-week stay in Kuwait we learned of our vague mission task. It was an encompassing task to patrol sectors of Baghdad, a very indistinguishable and non-definitive mission task at best. We readied our unarmored vintage aged humvees, and dawned our Vietnam era non-protective flak vests for the ride north. Severe logistical issues regarding equipment surfaced here again. No ammunition for our brand new MK-19 weapon system, no up armored humvees to patrol in, and still no interceptor ceramic plated vests to protect us. We adapted and overcame the best we could, sandbagging the floor boards of our 1986

humvees, creating weapons mounts for our other weapon system the M-249 SAW, and retrofitting a couple humvees with diamond plating on the side doors of the trucks.

Once in Baghdad things didn't improve much. We finally received our interceptor vests after a month in Baghdad complete with ceramic plates but still had problems with ammunition and non-armored vehicles. We were quickly improving and overcoming great obstacles with what we had to work with. Training was a continuous process. Overcoming enemy tactics such as IED's in the roadways forced us to vary our routes, continually improve base and area security, and maintain a high level of situational awareness. The United States military is a highly trained, skilled, adaptive, and intelligent force. The Guard and Reserve component forces have a lot to bring to the table as far as civilian background and how it is incorporated into use on the battlefield. For example, as a Military Police unit we have a large number of civilian law enforcement officers whose expertise and knowledge of policing provided first hand knowledge of patrol tactics, weapons proficiency, an urban backdrop and general policing duties to those of us less experienced. That factor alone made a true impact on our success during this deployment.

The 143rd Military Police Company and myself completed a one-year tour of duty in Baghdad, Iraq honorably while facing extreme odds and extenuating circumstances not in our favor. Several lessons have been learned some unfortunately due to casualties sustained and fellow brothers and sisters in arms lost. First and foremost let us equip our troops with the best possible gear to all units whether active duty, National Guard or Reserve component. Up armored Humvees, Interceptor vests, and IED Jamming systems are great initiatives but need to be dispersed to all troops deploying overseas. Next, let us phase in a training doctrine that relates more to a theater specific training regiment. There are several training sites in California, Nevada, and Louisiana that provide the type of climate that troops will soon see before they deploy. The mock urban warfare training ranges and sites are great tools that need to be taken advantage of. Language classes are also great tools and prove beneficial. Finally, it is imperative that these lessons learned from veterans be heard and the suggestions set forth to integrate this training doctrine to

all deploying units. Let us continue to be the most intelligent, best equipped, fighting force out there.

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